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Why The Confederacy failed

Rose

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By Duncan Rose.

With Opinions by

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LIEUT. GEN. JOSEPH WHEELER, C. S. A.
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RE-PUBLISHED BY COURTESY OF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.
The Cape Fear Press,
FAYETTEVILLE N. C.

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A. Rose

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THE CAVALRY.

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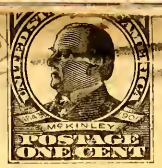

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Mr. Stephen B. Weeks

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From the Century Magazine, Nov. 1896.

WHY THE CONFEDERACY FAILED.

THE EXCESSIVE ISSUE OF PAPER MONEY—THE POLICY OF DISPERSION—THE NEGLECT OF THE CAVALRY.

If a person be asked the question "Why did the seceding states fail to win independence in the war of 1861–65?" the chances are that he will make one of two answers. It is likely that he will say that it was never intended that they should win; that America was designed by Almighty Providence for one great nation; that it is not divided by interior seas and other natural boundaries, but is essentially one country; and that any effort to divide it, not being a good cause, must fail. If he does not make such an answer as this, it is probable that he will say—especially if he is a Southerner—that the South was overpowered by the superior numbers and resources of the North. Now, the first of these answers is not satisfying. Whatever happens is intended to happen. If the Southern States had succeeded in their effort to separate from the North and set up a government for themselves, it could have been said with equal truth that it was intended to be so. As to the oneness of the country, Canada and Mexico are also a part of this one country; for hundreds of miles they are separated from us by imaginary lines only.

As to the other answer, all history teaches that in a war for independence superiority in numbers does not count. For instance, the little republic of Switzerland, surrounded by hostile kingdoms and empires in arms, won its independence upward of six hundred years ago, and it is independent to day, yet it has, and has always had, only an army of militia. The little principality of Montenegro has been fighting the Turks since the fall of Constantinople, even before the discovery of America. The Dutch republic, Scotland under Wallace and Bruce, Prussia under Frederick II in the Seven Years' War, and America in the Revolution, all succeeded with greater odds of numbers against them than were opposed to the seceding States. And to day, Cuba, with only a million and a half of population seems to be successfully fighting Spain with her

nearly twenty millions. No, in a war for independence mere numbers do not count, and it has not often happened in the history of the world that a people who have fought with such desperate valor as the Confederates displayed have failed to win independence.

As to material resources, there is no region under the sun more blessed in natural resources for waging war than the territory of the eleven seceding States. Within their own borders was to be found everything necessary for arming, equipping, feeding and clothing their armies. The history of the industrial development of the South during the war has never yet been written. It is even more wonderful than that of its armies in the field, and is the most striking proof of that versatility and ingenuity which are peculiar to the American people. Before the war it was purely an agricultural people; there were no shipyards, dockyards, factories, or machine-shops, to speak of. Within a few months after hostilities began these farmers and planters were building ironclads, marine boilers and engines, torpedoes and torpedo-boats. When Sumter was fired upon there was not a powder factory in all the land; soon almost every village had its piles of refuse for making saltpeter, and before the war ended the factories in Georgia and North Carolina could have supplied all the armies in the field with gunpowder. Cotton factories had also been built, and were all at work making cloth for the soldiers. And there was plenty of food in the South, though the soldiers failed to get their share of it, for corn had taken the place of cotton in the fields, and there was abundance of cattle and hogs. In the last year of the war Sherman's army marched through the South, living upon the fat of the land, while Lee's men were starving in the trenches before Petersburg. No; there was no lack of men and warlike resources in the South; the causes of failure must be looked for elsewhere.

A few have intimated that the cause of failure was that the hearts of the Southern people were not really in the war, and therefore they did not persevere and support the government as otherwise they would have done. There was never a greater slander cast upon a brave people. It was the people's war. The party for the Union disappeared when the conflict began. The people proved that their hearts were in the struggle by their sacrifices and sufferings; and if further proof were necessary their conduct toward the survivors of the Confederate army and the dead of the Lost Cause would be sufficient.

Then, if the South had the men and the warlike resources, and they were in earnest, how came it to pass that, unlike other brave peoples, they failed to win independence? How came their efforts to be so misdirected?

Three principal causes contributed to the fall of the Confederacy:

Why The Confederacy Failed.

1. THE EXCESSIVE ISSUE OF PAPER MONEY.
2. THE POLICY OF DISPERSION.
3. THE NEGLECT OF THE CAVALRY.

1. The Confederate government was smothered and strangled to death with its own irredeemable paper money.

It has been proved beyond shadow of doubt and cavil that war cannot be waged with paper money. Our forefathers proved it in the war of the Revolution, and had not the French and Dutch come to their rescue with real money, the American government, under its flood of continental bills, would have been strangled like the Confederacy, and would likewise have "died a-borning." However well or ill paper bills may answer for money in time of peace, in time of war they will not do. The "sinews of war" mean specie and nothing but specie, And to get specie, and those things which specie alone will buy, there must be taxes, taxes, and taxes. A people who are unwilling to be taxed have no business to engage in war. The Southern people knew that war meant taxes, and they were willing to be taxed to carry on the war. The sacrifices they made, the eagerness with which they loaned their money to the government, bought its bonds, and took its paper money showed that they were willing to be taxed.

But the Southern people were not fighting for independence only. They were contending as well for a certain theory of government. In order to be consistent with this theory— as their leaders conceived it—it was necessary, in framing a constitution, to render it unlawful for the government to tax the lands and goods of the people, except under conditions which made all taxation of property by the general government impossible. According to this theory, as they interpreted it, the government might lawfully order a man to shoulder his gun and march to the front to be shot at with rifle and cannon, but could not levy a tax upon his property to feed and clothe him while fighting for his country!

So, taxation of property being forbidden by fundamental law, and tariff or customs taxation of no avail because of blockaded ports, there was really nothing that the Confederate government could do to raise money except issue bonds and paper bills. Of these, before the war ended, between one and two thousand million of dollars— nominal value—were emitted, the paper bills amounting to nearly one billion, or over one half of the whole. Nor does this include the millions of paper bills issued by state authority and by banks, of which it would be hard to give even an approximate estimate. During the same time—to the end of 1864—there was raised by taxation only the sum of forty-eight millions of dollars, and that in paper money. It too might just as well have been printed, for then the cost of collection would have been saved. What more need be

said to show why the Confederacy failed?

Ah, those beautiful paper bills, so nice and clean and pretty, but every one as deadly a foe to the South as an armed enemy! And how the people ran to get them! And how those printing-presses rumbled—all a-printing paper money! They shook the earth, and almost drowned the noise of the cannon wheels rolling to the front. A Southerner should hate the sight of one of those paper bills. Every one of them represents blood fruitlessly spilled, treasure wasted, and hopes blasted.

But in the beginning of the struggle no one seemed to suspect an enemy in that beautiful mouey. The government, at least, acted upon the theory that all it had to do to raise money was to print it. They did not seem to realize that, being the largest purchaser in the market, it was necessary for the government to keep down prices as much as possible; that every issue of bills must inevitably raise prices, and render a new issue necessary; and that every rise in prices must be followed by a new issue, until the bubble must collapse of its own expansion and redundancy.

At last the lesson was learned that a printing-press cannot take the place of a tax-collector in providing the sinews of war, but it was then too late; the giant was already prostrate and helpless. When it had come to pass that the armies of the Confederacy were starving and freezing in camps and trenches, the government having not the means to buy them food and clothing; when it had come to pass that the War Department was compelled to pay a thousand of those paper dollars for a pair of army boots; when it had come to pass that a months pay of soldier would not buy him a single ration of bread and meat, the lesson was then learned; but it was too late. In the last gasp of the struggle the government attempted to abandon and throw off its make-believe money; but it was already buried, smothering and strangling under an avalanche, a mountain of paper dollars.

2. THE POLICY OF DISPERSION.

The frontiers of the Confederacy extended over many thousands of miles. The policy which the government adopted in the beginning of the war and upheld to the end was that every foot of that frontier must be defended. To this end, the whole Confederacy was divided into military districts, and to each general there was given "a definite geographical command", as the President of the Confederacy himself stated it. So the defense of the Confederacy was made a question of geography. Each general of a district was expected to drive back all enemies crossing his frontier, without much regard to what was going on in the other districts.

The better to carry out this idea, the capital was removed from Montgomery in the interior to Richmond, near the frontier "where

it was expected that most of the fighting would take place". And the defense of the shallow sounds of North Carolina in the rear of Richmond was deemed of more importance than that of the passes of the Appalachians.

A policy more fatal to success could not have been adopted. The armies of the Confederacy were wrecked and wasted in the vain effort to defend its capital and the extended, indefensible frontier. Every great pitched battle of the war, unless Chicamauga be an exception, was fought within a day's march of the frontier, or of navigable water, which was in effect the frontier, because the Federals with their gunboats held all the navigable waters. Wherever the Federals chose to throw down the gauntlet of battle, the Confederates immediately picked it up. The fighting was glorious, magnificent: there has never been any better fighting in all the history of the world. But the Federals were always well fed and clothed, and never lacked for ammunition and army supplies, becasue the Confederates were willing to do the fighting within gunshot of the Federal gunboats and transports.

And so the great advantage which the Confederates might have had in the contest—that of "fighting from a center"—was deliberately thrown away. It never seemed to occur to those in authority that the battles for the Confederacy should be fought, not upon the tidal waters of Virginia, or the banks of the Mississippi—"that great inland sea"—and its navigable tributaries, but with concentrated armies upon the flanks of the Appalachians.

When Bragg was sent through Cumberland Gap to occupy eastern Kentucky, the purpose was not to change the seat of the war, but to make a "diversion", and to "relieve the pressure on the Mississippi". But what could poor Bragg do, invading the rich and powerful North with his little army of thirty thousand men? And yet he has been blamed because he did not capture Cincinnati. He did very well, considering his opportunities. And even at the very time while Bragg was making his "diversion" in Kentucky, twice as many men as he had in all his army were scattered in garrisons along the Gulf coast, absolutely doing nothing. But the frontiers must be defended, and the capital too, if it took the last drop of Confederate blood! —Such was the policy of dispersion.

A lesson might have been learned from the war of the Revolution; for in that war the capital of the country was changed no fewer than nine times, and the British armies marched from one end of the thirteen colonies to the other; yet America was not conquered: or from that greatest defensive war of ancient or modern times, wherein Frederick II of Prussia maintained the independence of his country against combined continental Europe. With the Austrian armies in his front, the French on his flanks, and the Russians and

Swedes pillaging his capital in his rear, not a battalion of his army would he risk merely to hold territory. For six of these seven bloody years he did not even see his capital. "Let the frontiers and the capital take care of themselves; the heart of Prussia is her army!" And so, attacking and retreating, marching and countermarching, delivering terrible blows whenever he could strike to advantage, always keeping his men together and preventing his enemies from concentrating, he fought on, furiously, desperately, until the fortune of war changed, and the last armed foe was driven from his country. For himself he won the well-deserved title of "the Great", Prussia he saved from the fate of Poland, and for all succeeding ages he showed how a defensive war against superior numbers ought to be fought. —Such were the results of the policy of concentration.

It would have been better for the Confederacy if the government had thought that the "heart of the Confederacy was her army", for territory may be abandoned and yet re-occupied, and a city may fall and yet be re-captured, but an army once lost is gone forever, a soldier once dead cannot be brought back to life.

According to the policy of dispersion, however, it was not the army that was to be protected, but the territory and capital of the Confederacy. And so fifteen thousand men were lost at Fort Donelson in the effort to defend the frontier of Tennessee; thirty-two thousand men were lost at Vicksburg in the effort to defend the frontier of Mississippi; and thousands of brave men, untold and unnumbered, were lost in those terrible battles to defend Richmond, which was of no more value to the Confederacy than Norfolk, or any other city upon tide-water. If every city upon the seaboard had been evacuated at the beginning of the war, the Confederates would have been the stronger and their enemies the weaker just to the extent of the garrisons which were necessary to hold them. In the war of the Revolution the British, at one time or another, occupied every American seaport from Maine to the Florida line; the only effect of it was to relieve the Americans of the trouble and expense of defending them.

From first to last the armies of the Confederacy were never concentrated. Of all the six hundred thousand men in arms there were never got together upon a single battlefield more than seventy thousand available men. The scattered armies wasted away, and were destroyed and captured, piecemeal, while trying to defend the frontiers, so that when Sherman was ready to march into the interior through Georgia and the Carolinas, there was no army to oppose him, and there were no frontiers to defend. The cause of the Confederacy was already lost. The blood of its best and bravest had been spilled in vain. —Such were the results of the policy of dispersion.

Why The Confederacy Failed.

3. THE NEGLECT OF THE CAVALRY.

It is a fact worthy of remembrance that all the greatest generals of ancient and modern times have put their greatest faith in their cavalry. It was his superb cavalry, and not the Macedonian phalanx, with which Alexander charged the Persian center at Arbela, and won the crown of Asia. It was Hannibal's Numidian horse that slaughtered those eighty thousand Romans at Cannae, and carried the war to the very gates of Rome. It was Napoleon's powerful cavalry reserve at Austerlitz that enabled him to finish off that great victory with the capture of forty-three thousand Russian and Austrian prisoners, and a hundred pieces of artillery. And it is undoubtedly true, as that great captain himself stated it to be, that his success at Dresden did not avail to save his throne because the horses with which he had conquered Europe had perished in the the snows of the Russian steppes.

The Prussians are the greatest soldiers of modern times, and they have never made the mistake of underrating cavalry. It was Blucher's terrible cavalry which changed the drawn battle of Waterloo into that dreadful rout, and which pursued the flying French all that awful night after Waterloo, until, when the next day broke, there was not an organized body remaining of those with whom Napoleon marched out to fight. And in her last war it was the Prussian uhlans that made German victories so effective, and made possible Sedan with its two hundred thousand prisoners.

And so it it has come to be considered axiomatic, that however authorities may differ as to the relative value of the different arms of the service in battle, no great decisive and conclusive victory can be won without sufficient cavalry to press the pursuit; that the fruits of victory cannot be gathered, the harvest cannot be reaped without sufficient fresh men on horseback to pursue the retreating enemy—and this for the simple reason that pursuing infantry cannot overtake a retreating enemy.

It might be expected that as the Southerners were natural born horsemen, "cavaliers from the cradle", the mounted arm of the service would have been the strongest and the most esteemed and cherished; but, strange as it seems, the contrary, the very contradictory was true. From the beginning the cavalry was relatively the weakest, was underrated and neglected, and even ridiculed and derided. In jocularity rewards were offered for "a dead man with spurs on"—such a poor opinion had they of a soldier on horseback!

At the first great battle of the war, on the plateau of Manassas, the mounted men did not even fight as an organized body, but were divided, detailed, and attached two companies to each brigade, in imitation, perhaps, of the old Roman legion, a method of arranging mounted men in battle which was abandoned before the Christian

era. And yet Johnston has been blamed because he did not capture McDowell's army and the city of Washington. And at all times after that the little band of horsemen never seemed to be considered a constituent part of the fighting army. Nearly always they were separated from it on detached duty. At Gettysburg the Confederate cavalry was miles away when the fight began. It was not even a factor in the great fight until the last day. If Lee had won, and had captured the heights of Gettysburg, it could not have been in effect more than a drawn battle, because he had not sufficient cavalry with which to press the pursuit.

And so, from the begining to the end, either because the government could not learn the value of mounted troops, or was incapable of changing a policy once adopted, or for some inexplicable reason, the cavalry was underrated and neglected. The excuse cannot be offered that there were not sufficient horses in the Confederacy. A glance at the census of 1860 will show one that there were horses enough in Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina to have mounted all the Confederate armies in the field, leaving enough to make the crops. And surely if the government may lawfully "conscript" a man into the army, it may also conscript his horse, or his neighbor's horse. Almost at the very time when the General of the army of Tennessee was begging for horses to draw his cannon, a Federal army was capturing nearly two thousand horses from the farmers in the valley of Virginia.

Nor can the excuse be made that "the country in which the armies generally operated was so densely wooded, broken, and difficult that cavalry could not be used to advantage"—by "cavalry" meaning not only those who usually fought on horseback, cavalry properly speaking, in the European sense, but all mounted troops, as the Americans understand it. This was not true even in the War of the Revolution, when there were no roads at all, and nothing but grass to feed the horses. The little army with which Greene retreated so skilfully before Cornwallis along the Piedmont was nearly all cavalry, and Shelby's "back mountain men", some of them even from Tennessee, beyond the Alleghanies, with which he rode over the Blue Ridge to fall upon Ferguson at King's Mountain, were all mounted men, and Ferguson's army was captured to the last man.

The splendid work which Forrest did in the West was sufficient to show what might have been done had the cavalry branch of the Confederate service been organized. But neither Forrest nor his services were valued at their true worth. For a time he was even removed from his command, and at all times he was left to shift for himself to provide horses, arms, and equipments for his men.

If the country was too difficult for cavalry operations, how came it

that the very men whom Jackson, in 1862, led victorious and triumphant up and down the valley of the Shenandoah—how came it that these same men, in 1864, when once defeated, were to be seen throwing away their guns and haversacks, and fleeing for their lives to the woods and the mountains? It was not all Early's fault. It was "Sheridan's terrible cavalry" that did it, as Early said. For the Federal government had at last learned what could be done with men on horseback. And so Sheridan was sent to join Grant, and Appomattox speedily followed.

Who, then, can doubt that if Lee had been provided with a reserve of twenty thousand fresh cavalry, under such a leader as Forrest, at Gaines's Mill, or the second Manassas, or Chancellorsville, the Army of the Potomac would not have survived to fight another battle? For, unless Sheridan be excepted, there was no cavalry general on either side in the war that could equal Forrest in the pursuit of a defeated army. Lord Wolseley has said, in his sketch of Forrest, that "Forrest's sixty mile pursuit of Sturgis after their battle was a most remarkable achievement, and well worth attention by military students."

But no; it was not to be. Perhaps, as has been said, it was not "intended" to be. A fatality seemed to attend the cause. At these battles, yes, and at Shiloh, at Chicamauga, at Malvern Hill, and at Fredericksburg, which are claimed as great victories for the Confederacy, what was the gain? A Federal army destroyed or captured? No. A hundred pieces of artillery, with ammunition and equipments taken? No. Then what? The field of battle! "The Confederates fought gloriously, and won the field of battle." And that was all they ever won with all their fighting. Always on the next day, or within a few days afterward, the Federal army which they had defeated so "gloriously" was to be found drawn up in line of battle, and all the fighting had to be done over again. And so it was even to the end. The Confederates won many bloody fields of battle thickly strewn with the bodies or their own dead and wounded, as well as with those of their enemies, but from first to last they never gained a great victory, and the reason was because they were weak in cavalry.

But it is asked, "What doth it profit us to inquire into this? Anybody can criticize. Hindsights are better than foresights. 'Tis not so easy to do as to know what had been good to do. Wherefore, then, seek to know why the Confederacy failed?"

All of which is very true. The study of the past would be profitless if it were indulged in only for the pleasure of finding fault. But we must keep in mind that it is history only that can furnish us a guide to the future, and that it is only by the study of the mistakes and successes of others who have gone before us that we can know

how we should act under like circumstances.

Is not, then, the first cause of the failure of the Confederacy brought immediately home to us when we remember that the provision of the Confederate constitution which made it impossible for that government to raise money by taxation of property was copied word for word from the constitution of the United States, under which we are living to day? In case of a war with a great, first-class naval power the United States would be just as helpless to raise money necessary to wage such a war, except by issuing bonds and paper bills, as was the Confederacy when its ports were blockaded from Norfolk to Galveston. For it is very certain that the sinews of war cannot be raised by a tax upon whiskey, tobacco, and oleomargarine. It is property that must bear the brunt of a great war; and that is the first lesson that we may learn from the failure of the Confederacy.

No doubt the United States are strong enough to defend themselves, even though our generals should adopt a "policy of dispersion", but surely we can learn another lesson from the failure of the Confederacy.

The Confederate leaders were nearly all educated at West Point. Was it not at West Point that they learned to depreciate the cavalry? Is it not the tradition, the fashion to-day, at West Point to underrate the cavalry? Are not the "honor men", the distinguished men of the classes, assigned to the engineers and the artillery, while the dullards go to the cavalry?

Discussing the possibilities of a war with England, and the strength of the United States militia or national guard, some of our newspapers lately boasted that an army of a hundred thousand men could be thrown into Canada within a few weeks. If true, how many of them would be mounted on horseback? This a very pertinent inquiry, for it requires from three to six months' training to make a cavalryman, and some of the states which furnish large contingents to the national guard have not a single troop of horse. If there is any lesson that the failure of the Confederacy can teach us, it is this: that an invasion of Canada—and I do not mean that such a thing is, in the least degree, probable or desirable—made without sufficient cavalry would be as barren of permanent results as it would be if made with an army of crossbowmen.

Duncan Rose.

Why The Confederacy Failed.

From the Century Magazine, Nov. 1896.

Editorial Comment.

CHEAP MONEY IN TWO WARS.

In the very striking paper which we publish in this number of The Century on "Why the Confederacy Failed" there is a lesson in national finance which is none the less impressive because it is so familiar. It is the same lesson that has been taught at frequent intervals during the past four hundred years by every nation that has had the short-sightedness to tamper with its standard of value. "The Confederate government", says the waiter, "was smothered and strangled to death with its own irredeemable paper money." He does not say that this was the sole cause of the failure of the Southern rebellion, but he places it among the three causes which he enumerates. His argument in support of his views speaks for itself. There may be a difference of opinion on his second and third causes, but on his first there is likely to be none among men whose opinion is best worth having. No cause, however deserving, could have succeeded on such a financial basis as that on which the war of secession was conducted. The war of the revolution, as Mr. Rose points out, would have failed had not the French and Dutch come to the rescue of Washington and his army with real money.

On this point Washington's own words are conclusive. The crisis came in the spring of 1781, the seventh year of the war. The continental money had then become so worthless as to make useless further employment of it as a means of defraying the expenses of the war. John Laurens, one of Washington's aides-de-camp, was selected to go to Paris, to press upon the French government the needs of the army, and raise a new loan. Washington wrote to him on the eve of his departure: "Be assured, my dear Laurens, day does not follow night more certainly than it brings with it some additional proof of the impracticability of carrying on the war without the aids you are directed to solicit.....In a word, we are at the end of our tether, and now or never our deliverance must come." About this time Hamilton wrote to General Greene that public credit was so totally lost that nobody would furnish aid even in the face of impending ruin. To the appeals of Laurens France responded with a loan of four millions of livres; the French King granted

six millions more as a free gift, and also guaranteed in Holland a loan of ten millions more, making in all twenty million livres, or about five million dollars. This real money put such new life into the American army that Cornwallis was forced to surrender a few months later, and independence was won.

It is the opinion of most financial authorities that the greenbacks, instead of being a help to the North during the war of the rebellion, were a hindrance, and that we won in spite of them rather than because of them. Certain it is that they added enormously to the cost of the war. Mr. Henry C. Adams, in his work on "Public Debts", shows that the war cost us over $800,000,000 more than it would had we not issued greenbacks and thus gone off the gold standard. If the government had relied on increased taxation for funds to prosecute the war, it would have remained on the gold basis, and would have bought all its supplies on the same basis. At the same time it would have maintained its credit unimpaired, and would have been able to borrow all the additional money it needed, at much better rates than it actually paid. As it was it paid an average premium of fifty per cent on all its purchases for three years and a half. The total expenditure of the four years of the war was over three billion, three hundred and fifty million dollars, of which Mr. Adams estimates that two and one half billion dollars consisted of purchases in the open market, where the greenback dollar bought only sixty-six cents worth of goods. In other words, we spent two and a half billion dollars, and got in return only one billion, six hundred and thirty million dollars worth of property. The difference, eight hundred and seventy million dollars, was the unneccessary cost to the taxpayers which the greenback entailed.....

Why The Confederacy Failed.

From the Century Magazine, Feb. 1897.

OPINIONS OF GENERALS S. D. LEE, JOS. WHEELER, E. P. ALEXANDER, E. M. LAW, DON CARLOS BUELL, O. O. HOWARD, AND JACOB. D. COX.

The communications which follow from distinguished general officers who were engaged in the War of Secession have been received in reply to our request for frank comment upon the points raised in the article in THE CENTURY for November, entitled "Why the Confederacy Failed", written by Mr. Duncan Rose, —EDITOR CENTURY.

FROM STEPHEN D. LEE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, C. S. A.

I am asked to give my frank opinion of the correctness of Mr. Rose's article. The writer gives three main causes of failure: "1. The excessive issue of paper money, 2. the policy of dispersion, 3. the neglect of the cavalry", and remarks "The 'sinews of war' mean specie, and nothing but specie".

History tells us that nearly all great wars have been waged on currency that greatly depreciated in value, and yet with peace and success came full restoration of credit. This has been the case with England, France, Germany, and Russia. Finances always go wrong in failures. In our Revolution success could not even rescue the worthless money of our fathers from repudiation and oblivion. Alexander H. Stevens says that in the great war between the States "both sides relied for the means of support upon issues of paper money and upon loans secured by bonds." Nearly all currency issued by countries in great wars is to a certain extent "fiat money" and depends for its redemption mainly upon the success of the issuing country. Federal greenbacks had only the faith of the government behind them, while the bills and bonds of the Confederacy had enormous quantities of cotton and tobacco, received as tithes and purchased with bonds, that were assets against its liabilities. Had the Confederacy succeeded, its ability to meet its obligations would have been recognized by financiers.

Mr. Rose says that the Confederacy provided little for taxation, and during the war "there was raised by taxation only the sum of $48,000,000, and that all paper money." Certainly the people of the Confederacy were taxed when they gave their specie [all they

had] for bonds, and by law one tenth of all their crops and of all the proceeds of their labor in every industry. This latter was better than money. It was a tithe, which, although money fluctuated, did not fluctuate, but furnished food, cotton, tobacco, clothing, and supplies generally in kind, and was pretty abundant even to the close of the war in the limited area not occupied by hostile armies. The trouble was that the few lines of railroad were in a worn-out condition, and were overtaxed by transportation. I do not think the statement as to the first main cause is sustained.

I shall treat the second and third main causes together. Strategically, the Confederacy was virtually exposed to combined land and naval attack. "No country could have been more fully exposed to perfectly crushing blows, both on its land and water sides." This exposure was caused by the Mississippi River cutting it in twain, thus enabling the great fleets of Farragut from the ocean, and Foote from the North, to give valuable aid to Grant and Sherman, virtually cutting off Texas, Arkansas, and most of Louisiana, even before the fall of Vicksburg, July 4, 1863; and by the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, each reaching from the Ohio River with a deep southward bend into the very heart of the country, enabling the fleets to transport Grant's army to Fort Henry, and be his flank at Donelson. The control of these rivers, and others from Atlantic and Gulf coasts, was of vital moment, and neither men nor means should have been spared to maintain control of these water highways. Certainly to do so was not dispersion.

The Confederacy had no navy worth mentioning, and when it lost control of these rivers it lost Texas, Arkansas, most of Louisiana, and most of Tennessee, for troops from the trans-Mississippi refused to cross the river after 1862; nor had it vessels to protect the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, or to prevent blockade. The Confederacy for the last two years, and on the territory where the issue was decided, was composed of the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi—seven States—and was a narrow strip from the Potomac to the Mississippi River, open to combined land and naval attack along its entire fronts—north, south, east, and west. There were really only two main armies—Lee's in Virginia, and Johnston's in Georgia. The Mississippi army had been merged in the Army of Tennessee. This does not appear to be dispersion.

Dispersion, mainly in cavalry, was a political necessity. The battle of States' rights and local self-government was being fought. The States that furnished troops and supplies demanded protection from invasion, desolation, and pillage; and this was reasonable when we consider the character of the war as shown by Sherman's raid in Mississippi and through Georgia, and Sheridan's campaign in

the valley and in other places, the official letters and reports of these officers, and their spirit, not representing one half of the real character of their work. Why send troops to help Virginia and Georgia, and leave other States to desolation and pillage? Certainly this question is pertinent when we consider how the country was laid waste.

The cavalry, when not with the two great armies, was protecting vast granaries needed to feed troops, and defending arsenals and depots which in the narrow belt were open to attack and destruction everywhere, owing to the great odds, and the fleets holding the ocean, gulf, and rivers. The charge of dispersion does not hold good.

The writer speaks of cavalry as it existed in the days of Napoleon and the Revolution. Times had greatly changed. The rifled cannon and the Springfield and repeating rifles, arms of precision with long range, had relegated to the past the dashing cavalry charge against infantry or artillery supported by infantry. Such handling of cavalry then would have been slaughter and death to man and horse. Any splendid brigade of infantry in either army felt secure against the attack of charging cavalry. Besides our country was more wooded than Europe. No general could watch and plan on his tower as Napoleon did. What could cavalry do in charges on the battlefield of the Wilderness, or at Chicamauga, where the fields were mere patches? Cavalry was nothing more than mounted infantry, and fought on foot even in most cases against cavalry. This arm played as important a part as it ever did in war. It covered the front, rear, and flanks of armies. By celerity of movement it met and overcame or checked isolated columns of troops. It played on lines of transportation; it overlapped armies in battle, and destroyed their trains; and in great battles even moved up along with infantry. It protected extended territory when oth troops were concentrated in the great armies. No class of troops was more ably commanded or did better service in either army. The Confederate cavalry was well mounted till near the close of the war. They could not take all the horses from a people who had made so many sacrifices, as the Federals did from the people of the South. [See Sherman's report of his march to the sea.] The cavalry was as well equipped and armed as the circumstances permitted.

I am one of those who, like my great namesake, said: "I will not speculate on the causes of the failure, as I have seen abundant causes for it in the tremendous odds brought against us"; "the South was overpowered by the superior numbers and resources of the North". If we compare the two parts of the country, we find the North outnumbering the South four to one in arms-bearing population, incomparably better prepared for war, having an organized government, an organized army and navy, with arsenals, dock.

yards, and machine-shops, and having free intercourse with the world from which to get supplies and men; while every port was sealed against help from the outside world to the Confederacy, which had to organize its government, and improvise everything for the unequal struggle from an agricultural population.

The official records show that the North had two million, six hundred thousand men from first to last; after October, 1861, never less than eight hundred thousand, and often exceeding one million men. One million and fifty thousand men in round numbers were mustered out at the close of the war.

The Confederates, who, by the most reliable records and authority, had six hundred thousand from first to last, surrendered one hundred and fifty thousand men. The effective force in the field never exceeded two hundred thousand men at any one time. This army came mainly from the eleven seceding States, having a population of six million whites [three million males]. It was about all that the population could do in soldiers. "The Union armies outnumbered those of the Confederacy in all cases as two, commonly as three, and during the entire time in which Grant was in command as four, to one". When we consider that in nearly all important battles the forces did not differ very much, the charge of dispersion might be lodged against the Union commanders rather than against the Confederate, and, considering the relative odds in enlistments, does not indicate dispersion on the part of the Confederates.

In addition to the land forces, the navy of the United States consisted of seven hundred vessels of war, manned by 105,000 sailors, with a fleet of transports, steamers, barges, and coal-floats almost innumerable, which in 1862, on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, alone numbered over 2200 vessels—a great help to General Grant and other generals in operating against Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

It was not known what was the number of vessels chartered on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts in moving the large armies to Port Royal, the North Carolina coast, Florida Mobile, and Louisiana. The navy in its help was as decisive in results as the great armies in the field. Without its aid the armies of the Union might not have been successful. It blockaded the coast from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. It cut up the Confederacy by her rivers, in occupying these with gunboats; in establishing many depots and points of departure from the line of coasts and from the river banks, for armies to invade, overrun, and destroy supplies in new territory; in transporting armies around territory they could not cross; and in saving armies when defeated. Coupled with the navy, I mention the great trunk railways converging in and skirting Confede-

rate territory, connecting with powerful States full of supplies to support armies, and able to transport them in any emergency to any point.

I feel that General Lee's quotation is a good one, and none other need be sought as a cause of failure.

S. D. Lee.

BY JOSEPH WHEELER, LIEUTENANT GENERAL C. S. A.

HISTORY will attribute the failure of the Confederate cause to the great preponderance of men and resources with which it was confronted.

In commenting upon Mr. Rose's article, I would say:

1. That the financial system might have been better no one will deny; but when we consider that a new-born nation equipped, furnished with ammunition, fed, clothed, and paid an army which for four years engaged a force 600,000 strong, it must be admitted that there was much in our financial management to commend.

2. I think the author goes to extremes in condemning the military policy which he terms one of dispersion.

The force with which we defended Charleston was less by far than that with which it was attacked. The surrender of 13,000 men at Fort Donelson was unnecessary. It was quite possible to have withdrawn the army after it had become apparent that the position was untenable. And it is certain that we should never have allowed 30,000 men to become penned up at Vicksburg. But these disasters cannot properly be attributed to the policy which Mr. Rose condemns.

The author is mistaken in the assertion that "if every city upon the seaboard had been evacuated at the beginning of the war the Confederates would have been the stronger". He is also mistaken in his suggestion that we "should have learned a lesson from the war of the Revolution, whose capital was changed nine times, and the British allowed to march from one end of the thirteen colonies to the other". In that war, and in Frederick's Seven Years' War to which he also refers, the conditions were very different from those in our conflict. We were more dependent upon arsenals and depots and lines of communication, and we had political as well as military conditions to consider. The breaking of our railroads by which supplies were carried from our Southern granaries would have made it impossible for us to hold Richmond, and the retreat of Lee's army into the Carolinas or Georgia would have been the beginning of the end.

3. The tendency in European armies during the last thirty years has been to increase the cavalry as compared with the other arms, and it is true that a large proportion of cavalry generally adds to the efficiency and power of an army. Especially would this apply to a country like the South, where so many were trained horsemen; nevertheless, after careful consideration, the policy adopted by the Confederate army commanders was to encourage an increase of their infantry, and to discourage and even prohibit enlistments in the cavalry. In European wars it often occurred that the weaker of two contending armies became disordered, and in this condition a charge by a large body of cavalry completed the discomfiture; but, with rare exceptions, matters were very different during the Civil War.

The first battle of Manassas and the battle of Shiloh might, however, be well cited to sustain the position taken by Mr. Rose. An organized cavalry force under a good commander at Manassas could have overtaken and captured much of McDowell's army in its retreat to Washington, and such a force at Shiloh could have intercepted much of Grant's army in its retreat to the Tennessee River; but after this the improved organization, discipline, and equipment of the Federal army, together with its numerical preponderance, gave it such strength that very few opportunities were offered for cavalry to charge upon a flying foe. At Perryville the Federal corps and divisions which became seriously engaged were defeated and driven in disorder, but night came on and ended the conflict. Our cavalry was occupied with large forces which extended beyond our flanks, and it charged upon them and captured many prisoners; but the complete rout of 70,000 men under Buell by less than one third of that number was not possible. When Murfreesboro' was fought, the cavalry division of Forrest was in western Tennessee, and that of Morgan in Kentucky. The remaining cavalry did valiant service, going around the Federal rear, and charging with good effect upon the disordered Federal right. At Chicamauga our cavalry pursued and captured a number of the retreating enemy, but darkness and barricades stopped their advance, and the next day Rosecrans' army was behind breastworks and fortifications invulnerable to attacks from cavalry. During the last year or eighteen months of the war we did not have an army strong enough to defeat and disperse the army by which it was opposed, and chances for cavalry to pursue and complete their discomfiture did not arise.

In General Sherman's campaign in 1864, his force was more than double that commanded by General Johnston. Sherman's army was thoroughly organized, well equipped, well officered and disciplined. It is true that on many occasions we gained a decided victory at the point of attack, and in July 1864 the Confederate

cavalry defeated and dispersed 10,000 cavalry under Stoneman, Garrard, and McCook; but these Confederate successes in no wise disordered the Federal troops which did not engage us, and there was very seldom any flying foe for such cavalry operations as are referred to by Mr. Rose.

The important service performed by this arm was to fight dismounted as infantry, keep close up to the enemy, keep informed of their movements, cover our flanks and prevent their being turned, and frequently to raid upon the enemy's communications. Its business was also to fight the numerous cavalry of the opposing army. With rare exceptions, all these duties were well performed.

What has been said in regard to the opposing armies of Sherman and Johnston also applies to the armies under Grant and Lee. No one will controvert the fact that an increased cavalry force would have been of great service to the Confederacy; but if that increase had been obtained by taking from the infantry, it can hardly be contended that it would have added to our strength. Every thoughtful man will admit that the life of the Confederate government depended upon our maintaining the army under Lee in Virginia, and the Army of the West, commanded at different times by the Johnstons, Beauregard, Bragg, and Hood. It was evident during the entire conflict that so long as these armies were sustained without serious disaster the Confederacy would live; but that if either was disabled by defeat in battle, or by loss of resources, so as to be unable to present a firm front to the opposing army, the almost immediate fall of the government would be the inevitable result.

Joseph Wheeler.

BY E. P. ALEXANDER, BRIGADIER GENERAL OF ARTILLERY C. S. A.

I CONCUR in Mr. Rose's belief that the success of the Confederacy was, for a time, not impossible; but I think it is as difficult to assign brief and general reasons for its failure as it would be to say why A has beaten B in a long and closely contested game of chess. Probably during forty moves B might have won by different play, and each move of the forty might be called the fatal one. But I do not think at all that Mr. Rose has made out his case for any one of the three moves, or causes which he assigns.

Without discussing how or whether the issue of Confederate currency could have been avoided, it is enough to say that it answered its purpose; and the credit of the Confederacy was good enough, both at home and abroad, when its last chance in the field was gone. This date, I think, can be exactly fixed as June 15, 1864, the reasons therefor being another story. Up to that date the Confederacy

could buy anything in the world, from an ironclad in France to a horseshoe in Richmond. The trouble lay in blockades and other obstacles to getting needed articles from places where they could be procured to places where they were needed. Times were often hard in the field and camp, but this cut little figure when the trial of battle was on, and we never lost a field that I know of for lack of food, ammunition, clothes, or anything that money might have bought. Mr. Rose's deductions as to the principles of national taxation are sound enough, and there are indeed many other valuable lessons to be learned from the history of Confederate money, some of them apropos, too, to the present time; but it is not fair to hold its issue responsible for the loss of any battle having any influence upon the final result.

2. I cannot agree at all with Mr. Rose's statement that the Confederate government attempted to hold unnecessary frontier. It was bound to hold large and undisturbed agricultural districts in order to raise food for its armies and it was bound to guard, even against bridge-burning raids, the long railroad arteries which brought up supplies to the armies; and it was bound to maintain somewhere very large arsenals and machine shops and warehouses, and to protect them when once located. Richmond, for instance, was defended to the death, not for its being the capital, but for containing the Tredegar Ironworks, without which, it has been said, our armies could not have kept in the field two years. The capital could be moved, but the ironworks could not. These necessities seem to me to justify the defense of every foot of territory which was held after the war was once fairly joined. But had all the Confederate armies been concentrated, as Mr. Rose suggests, on the flanks of the Appalachians, or anywhere else, abandoning their arsenals and sources of supply, they would soon have been out of ammunition, and would have been starved into surrender.

Had Mr. Rose, however, criticized the neglect of the Confederate government to utilize the advantage it possessed in having what is technically called "the interior lines" by transferring heavy reinforcements rapidly back and forth between the East and West, he would have made the most severe criticism which I think can be justly made upon Confederate strategy. This was attempted only once—in September 1863—and then, though under difficulties preventing attainment of the best results, Chicamauga was made a sort of victory, instead of a disastrous defeat.

The greatest opportunity ever offered for such strategy was probably in May 1863, after Hooker's defeat at Chancellorsville. It was discussed at that time, but not adopted. Vigorously executed, it might have forestalled both the Vicksburg and the Gettysburg campaigns.

3. As to the alleged "neglect of cavalry", Mr. Rose greatly underestimates the difficulty of supplying horses, and he entirely ignores that of getting men. Men could have been had only by diminishing the number of our infantry man for man. Considering our inferiority in numbers, and the topography of our average battlefields, I think no competent military critic would have advised in any of our armies exchanging any material number of our infantry for cavalry. Indeed, the general tendency, as the war went on, was to convert our cavalry into mounted infantry. For the day of decisive cavalry charges passed away with the advent of long range small arms, breech loaders, and improved artillery. Even at Waterloo, had half or more of Napoleon's cavalry been infantry or artillery, his chances would have been improved; for their first charge left a rampart of dead horses which broke up all renewed efforts. We may see in future armies large developments of mounted infantry, possibly two men to a horse sometimes, but cavalry, in the old sense of the term, will cut little figure in the future.

It is surely very shallow to charge West Point with depreciation of the cavalry because officers selected for branches of the service requiring the most skilled application of higher mathematics are chosen from among those who, other things being equal, are most proficient in mathematics. Any other principle of selection would be absurd.

Most of Mr. Rose's arguments and illustrations are drawn from events that happened on a different planet from the one now occupying our orbit. The old one, on which Numidians, Macedonians, Napoleon, Frederick, George III, and our forefathers adjusted their various difficulties, was not fitted up either by land or by sea with steam and electrical appliances. Virtually the only way to go anywhere in force was to walk on land or to take small and inferior sailing-craft by sea. Consequently there were many cases where small nations got the better of large ones because the big fellow could not get at the little one. But in our case the big fellow was all about the little one from the very start, leaving him no resources but Providence and his own pluck. Which failed him, it would be invidious to inquire.

E. P. Alexander.

BY E. M. LAW, MAJOR GENERAL, C. S. A.

I AM LOATH to criticize so thoughtful and interesting a paper as that of Mr. Duncan Rose in the November number of THE CENTURY on the question "Why the Confederacy Failed", especially as it opens a field of investigation the cultivation of which may bring to

light much interesting and as yet unwritten history. But I cannot entirely agree with his conclusion that "in a war for independence numbers do not count". The history of Poland and that of Hungary are conspicuous refutations of the statement. "The little republic of Switzerland" which he cites, "won its independence" by reason of the very fact that the kingdoms and empires by which she was surrounded were "in arms" as often against one another as against her, as well as because of the impregnability of her mountain fastnesses when properly defended. If we are to credit history, Frederick the Great was "at the last gasp" during the Seven Years' War and Prussia would probably have shared the fate which overtook Poland a few years later had not the opportune death of the Empress Elizabeth and the accession of Peter III converted Russia, his most powerful foe, into a friend and ally. And, however much national pride may rebel at the admission, the unbiassed student of our own Revolutionary history must confess that the American cause was well-nigh hopeless when the powerful intervention of France, and the complications of England with Spain and Holland, turned the scale in our favor. Besides the moral effect of the recognition of our independence, the fleets of France broke the strict blockade of the American Ports, and provided the colonies with supplies which were of far more value to them than the few troops furnished by their ally. Had a like good fortune attended the Confederate States, had some friendly nation powerful enough to enforce its decrees recognized their independence and opened their ports, their subjugation would have been impossible, even if we admit the full force of all the reasons assigned for failure.

Our ports being closed, however, and the Confederacy being dependent entirely upon its internal resources and credit, Mr. Rose's criticism of its financial system is unanswerable. The free use of the taxing power, to which as a war measure the people would have submitted as patiently as they did to the conscription, was all that could have saved its finances from the ruin that speedily overtook them through the continued issue of irredeemable paper money.

"The policy of dispersion", which Mr. Rose assigns as another cause of failure, was from a military point of view the gravest mistake that could have been made. It prolonged the struggle, no doubt, but continued adherence to it under the conditions that existed meant certain failure in the end. Some Confederate officers, notably General Joseph E Johnston, realized this early in the war; but their views were overruled by the Richmond government, which seemed to dread nothing so much as a loss of territory, and adhered to the end, with fatal pertinacity, to the policy of holding positions the defense of which could result only in disaster to the defenders. Whether the Confederate cause would have been won by pursuing

an opposite course we cannot know; but a policy of concentration and hard blows, with the decisive results that must have followed, would at least have had the merit of deciding the struggle quickly, and saving the country the prolonged agony and wasting effects of a four years' war.

For the third cause of failure assigned by Mr. Rose, namely, "the neglect of the cavalry", I would substitute "the dispersion of the cavalry." I think the records will show that the Confederacy had cavalry enough in proportion to the other arms of the service, and of a quality superior, man for man, to their antagonists. Had it been concentrated in large bodies in the vicinity of our great armies under such leaders as Stuart, Forrest, Van Dorn, and Hampton, instead of being scattered by companies, regiments, and brigades all over the country, the many great victories won by those armies might have been as fruitful as they were in fact barren of results.

The causes that contributed to Confederate failure were many, but among them all none can be compared in potency and far-reaching influence to the failure to provide an adequate navy as well as an army; and that far sighted statemanship in the beginning of the struggle could have done this there is little doubt. With open ports, foreign trade would have given the Confederate finances impregnable strength, the armies would not have suffered the deprivation of many things necessary to the efficiency of soldiers in the field, and the rivers of the South would not have been free waterways for Federal gunboats. But despite all the errors of statemanship, financiering, and generalship, in spite of resources rendered unavailable by reason of blockaded ports, and in the face of greatly superior numbers, the valor and devotion of the Confederate soldier came "perilously near" winning the fight. On two occasions, at least, the cause was well-nigh won, but lost again in such a way as almost to compel belief in the direct interposition of Providence.

E. M. Law.

BY DON CARLOS BUELL, MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. A.

Why did the Confederacy fail? The comprehensive answer is that it failed for lack of ability to succeed. To say that the effort was one of the most heroic that ever miscarried is only to emphasize the formidableness of the obstacles that opposed it.

When we look into the particulars, we find, in comparison with the government which it strove to throw off, that it was deficient in every element that could affect the result of such an enterprise but courage; indeed, we shall be amazed that four years of gigantic effort were required for its overthrow, if we lose sight of the vigor of the resistance, and the inherent difficulty of overcoming any organ-

ized revolt of such proportions. We find it completely shut in from foreign intercourse; we find it relatively deficient in men and money and resources of every sort, in military equipment, in facilities for interior communication, in mechanical appliances, in the mechanical skill which so much aided the armies of its adversary, in that material development which occupies so important a place in modern civilization, in foreign confidence and sympathy, in internal confidence as well, and in that profound popular impulse which continually strengthened the armies of its opponent, and threw the whole energy of the North into the contest.

Certainly the early stage of the war was marked by great enthusiasm and bitterness on the part of the South, especially among the upper classes, and the losing cause was followed with fidelity to the end. The Union sentiment in the North was as strong, as enthusiastic, and more general; and there was besides, in an already dominating and growing element, a motive that was stronger and more enduring than enthusiasm—an implacable antagonism which acted side by side with the cause of the Union as a perpetual impelling force against the social conditions of the South, controlling the counsels of the government, cadencing the march of its armies to the chorus:

"John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
But his soul is marching on."

There was from the first but one reasonable chance for the survival of the Confederacy, and that lay in foreign intervention. Recognition alone would not have availed. How long the contest would have been protracted by such interference, and what might have been the ultimate consequences, are questions which it is not pleasant for an American and a lover of civil liberty to contemplate.

In a conflict of such magnitude as our Civil War, it followed naturally that economic and military policies should exert an important influence. Mere promissory money would be apt to cause embarassment, but not fatally so in the isolated condition of the Confederacy so long as it satisfied the conditions of interior trade. Intrinsically the greenbacks of the North were no better than the paper promises of the South; yet they constituted virtually the sole circulating medium, were received with confidence, and the country was commercially prosperous during the war. In the North the use of such money was a policy or device. In the South it was a necessity; for, unable to borrow money abroad, if direct taxation could have been resorted to it would have been futile: the country did not possess wealth enough in an available form for the emergency.

The failure of the financial expedient thus adopted by the South from necessity, without any foundation of material value, became inevitable as soon as it lost the confidence of the public. If there

was at the time no other symptom of a distrust of their cause, the rejection of the money of the Confederacy by the people was a sufficient sign of a lack of faith. The bad money was a consequence, not a cause.

The policy of dispersion, as it is called, in the military operations has been criticized on both sides, but not with convincing argument. The conflict was not of a nature to be decided by a single campaign, or on purely strategic grounds. The mission of the Federal government was to invade, put down armed opposition, and restore its authority; and the largeness of the force called to the task permitted, indeed required, its employment in different fields of operation at the same time. Correspondingly all the circumstances of the occasion imposed upon the Confederates the general plan of a popular defensive war. Apart from the necessity of securing the resources of every portion of their territory, by just so far as the Confederate forces consolidated might by superior skill cope successfully with the superior numbers of their opponent, by so far within judicious limits might their successes be multiplied by division against their divided adversary.

There is no reason to suppose that a more extensive or a different use of cavalry would have changed the result of the war. The Confederacy was no better able to secure supremacy in that arm than in any other. The probability is strongly to the contrary, and the South had most to apprehend from rivalry in that direction.

But no explanation of the triumph of the Union cause could be more superficial and erroneous than that which would ascribe the result to military leadership, however meritorious, rather than to the immense momentum of popular will and intelligence which animated and directed the population of the North. That power found an efficient preliminary organizer in the State governments—that peculiar feature of "imperium in imperio" in our political system, which, however it may tend to preserve the liberties of the citizen, may in some future crisis prove as powerful an agent for evil to the nation as in this instance it was fruitful of good to both. It did not contribute as much to the Confederate cause in the South as it did to the cause of the Union in the North.

In these brief notes upon the chances of the Confederacy I make no reference to the so-called teachings of history, which often fail to elucidate satisfactorily the questions to which we apply them. Moreover the conditions of the civilization of the present day—especially in their bearing upon military science and the mission of civil government—are too unlike those of even a hundred years ago to make it safe to draw comparisons of action without the most careful analysis.

D. C. Buell.

Why The Confederacy Failed.

BY O. O. HOWARD, MAJOR GENERAL, U. S. A. RETIRED.

WHILE I do not agree with a number of Mr. Rose's postulates, his article presents a number of important points worthy of study and thought.

It was long my favorite theory, born of my deepest conviction, and expressed in a letter to the "New York Times" at the very beginning of the war, that the Union arms would never be successful until the government aimed directly and indirectly with all its power at the extinction of human slavery. With reference to the intrinsic wrong in slavery, I believe the whole nation participated in its perpetuation, and that this fact affected the morale of our people and our armies. When, after terrible chastisement, our morale followed the divine leading, success became continuous and finally complete.

In fervor. devotion to a cause, and persistency, there was doubtless little difference between the governments, peoples, and soldiers of the South and North.

1. The Confederate government promised to pay dollars [gold or silver] six months after recognition of the Confederacy by the United States. These promises, used as currency, naturally depreciated as their volume increased and the likelihood of success lessened. But all peoples subjected to extraordinary expenses are wont to throw part of the cost upon the future. The Union government did the same in the Civil War. It was hardly possible for the Confederacy to avoid the issue of these promises. Their reckless issue toward the end was like the straw at which the drowning man catches; it was an endeavor to keep the Confederate armies together for a little space while the government looked and prayed for European help.

At last the South was fairly exhausted. The worthless paper money was only an incident. In some localities, at every period of the war there was much baled cotton; and though it commanded a high price anywhere outside the blockading squadron, within the Confederacy it was of little value, as it could be neither eaten nor shot at the enemy.

2. "The policy of dispersion" referred to I deem a necessity; for as soon as any portions of the seceded States were held by the Union army they contributed nothing to the Confederacy, but, on the other hand, furnished supplies to the United States. As men understood the art of war in 1861, the military administration of the South could hardly have been excelled. It is true that the armies under Lee and Johnston were hampered at times by a weak government; but all governments are human, and liable to weakness in organization and mistakes in operation.

Why The Confederacy Failed.

Following a reaction against Napoleon's system, the war in the Crimea, as well as our own in its earlier stages, made much of strategic positions. After General Grant's series of demonstrations in battle, we now clearly see that the objective should have been the enemy's active army. The danger to the respective capitals was indeed a great bugbear; for as long as either side had a well-equipped army, the capture of either capital would have been only an advantage, not a conclusive victory. Certainly the strategic theory or the political situation caused the shedding of much blood and the expenditure of much treasure, which from a purely military point of view was a sad waste. The endeavor should have been to destroy the opposing army.

3. It takes long training to make effective cavalry, even if raw recruits can ride. The use of horses to transport troops rapidly from point to point for the purpose of fighting on foot was developed during the war. Confederate generals found that such cavalry as they could raise was very expensive and hard to keep efficient. As soon as they had had a little experience in battle, it was not the nature of our armies to become so demoralized after defeat that cavalry could overrun and destroy them. Shiloh, Chicamauga, and Malvern Hill were hardly victories for the Confederacy, and even Fredericksburg became so only because the Union army failed to carry a position. It withdrew without loss of organization. The reason the Confederates did not gain in these more decisive advantage was not because they were weak in cavalry, but because of the stamina of the withdrawing troops. Union victories, so called, were many, but were not decisive, except in a few instances, because of the stamina of the Confederate soldiers.

During the Rebellion we lived under a constitution which somewhat checked our raising money. These provisions were copied into the Confederate constitution. Doubtless there was some disability here, but now we could constitutionally increase our income from the internal-revenue taxes by adding other articles to the list sufficiently to carry on a foreign war—that is if public opinion would permit. Still, should war come, part of its expenses would doubtless be thrown over to the future by the government borrowing money. In reference to losses from the "policy of dispersion", our principal sea-coast cities must be defended as naval depots; after that, the objective should always be the destruction of any hostile army landing on our shores or entering our country from the North or the South.

Mr. Rose is mistaken in the matter of the assignment of West Point graduates. No "dullard" is graduated at West Point. Classes which begin with more than a hundred usually graduate less than fifty. Of these fifty, not more than five go into the engineers.

The other graduates are always allowed a choice of arms according to their class standing. The cavalry vacancies are generally all filled before the members of a lower half of a class have had a chance to select.

Again, I should say that an invasion of Canada, even without an extraordinary cavalry force, could be made an effective military operation, though a good cavalry force is, of course, always desirable. Its efficiency under Sheridan, however, [and it would be more so now] was not so much from the old cavalry impact, as from the advantage gained by transferring men with good arms from point to point with rapidity. Surely the writer undervalues General J. E. B. Stuart as a cavalry leader. His view probably arises from his partiality for the energy and enterprise of General Forrest.

Oliver O. Howard.

BY JACOB D. COX, MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. V.

In all great historical events the causes co-operating to produce the result are sure to be numerous— so numerous that it would hardly be wrong to call them numberless. The student of history gets so accustomed to crises in which a slight change of circumstance or conduct would, apparently, have given a wholly different trend to affairs, that he gives up the problem of the "might have beens" as one impossible of solution. Yet there is so much that is fascinatng in such speculations that we may be sure many another Southerner besides Mr. Rose has spent long hours of wistful thought upon his question, though not many have so persuasively presented an answer.

Yet when he dismisses the answer that it was contrary to the will of Providence that the South should win, does he not miss some of the reasons contained in that solution of the matter? Many an earnest Southern man now sees and acknowledges that "all has turned out for the best", which is only another way of saying that a superior wisdom and a more potent will than theirs was ruling the world; and they find consolation in the thought. Then we must remember that this view does not imply a mere arbitrary fiat. Under a reign of law it means a supremely wise adaptation of means to ends and causes to effects, if we are only able to trace them.

For instance, except for the fact that the system of slavery was in conflict with the public opinion of the civilized world, there would seem to be little doubt that both France and England would have intervened actively in behalf of the Confederacy. When we read the evidence of the embarassment of the statesmen of those coun-

tries in the presence of the necessity of deciding whether they would join in a war to establish a new nation on the basis of African slavery, we are made to feel strongly that a moral force was at work here that was great enough to account for the difference between success or failure in even so gigantic a struggle. The summary of facts bearing on this point which Mr. Rhodes has given in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of his "History of the United States" is very instructive. But this non-intervention made possible the great blockade of two thousand miles of sea-coast, depriving the Confederacy of a foreign commerce which was a vital factor both in marketing her own products and in procuring munitions of war.

Mr. Rose has sketched with no little power the mischiefs which resulted from unlimited issues of irredeemable paper money; but can we call it a principal cause of the Confederate failure? France did not fail in her struggle with Europe because of the worthlessness of her assignats. They were swept into her dust-bins, and she began again on a sounder financial basis, and carried her eagles across the continent. We of the North also suffered from paper issued on doubtful credit, and even the statesman who issued it lived to declare, as Chief Justice, with noble frankness, that the constitutional powers of the government had been strained in doing so, and that the desperate resort to war powers must end, at least, when peace was achieved.

It is easy for us now to argue that the Confederate notes as well our own were bad finance; but the true reason for their issue was that the statesmen in power on both sides did not believe that the people would stand the enormous taxation required to "pay as you go". They looked for refusal to support war measures and war administrations when the burden of taxation should be oppressively felt. They may have been wrong, but they were able politicians, and we must not be too confident that they misjudged the situation.

To examine the causes of success and failure on both sides is too large a task for condensation into a page, and one can only suggest that Mr. Rose, in his contention that the Confederate armies fought without necessity on "indefensible frontiers", seems to use the term in a questionable way. The frontier in the West was virtually the Ohio River. Fort Donelson, Murfreesboro', Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Atlanta made a line of interior positions in the very heart of the country from which the Confederate government must draw its resources till Sherman completed the dissevering by the march to the sea, and thence north to the capital of North Carolina.

A similar brief suggestion as to the advantage of cavalry must limit what I can say. The cavalry which Mr. Rose advocates are the horsemen of European armies, trained by years of severe drill and instruction of both man and beast to produce effects by the

"shock" of galloping thousands using the lance or saber. It was well known that there was neither time nor opportunity to produce such cavalry in our Civil War, and most men of military experience still think the character of the country would have made their use in large bodies impracticable. Our use of horses was only to carry men quickly to the desired position, when they dismounted and fought on foot with carbines much inferior in range and caliber to the infantry weapons. General Forrest openly discarded sabers, and was the most pronounced advocate of dependence on the carbine and revolver in such country as our Western and Southern States.

Is it not reasonable then to conclude that the heavier battalions of the Northern army, persistently advancing into the Confederate States, and aided by the moral causes first-mentioned, secured results which are consistent at once with military principles and with the purposes of Providence in regard to America?

Jacob D. Cox.

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